

A

# CHARGE

DELIVERED AT THE

## CONSTITUTION

OF THE

L O D G E, N<sup>o</sup> CXXX.

AT THE

SWAN in WOLVERHAMPTON,

On Tuesday the 30th of October 1764.

---

By the *Right Worshipful* GRAND MASTER,  
P R O T E M P O R E.

---



---

B I R M I N G H A M:  
Printed by *James Sketchley*, in the *High-street*.

MDCCLXV.

C H A R G E

DELIVERED AT THE

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

L O D G E N O C A S E

THE

SWAN IN HAMPTON

ON THE 15th OF OCTOBER 1764.



By the Right Honorable GRAND MASTER  
PRO TEMPORE



Printed by James Smith in the High Street  
BIRMINGHAM

MDCCLXXV



THE  
C H A R G E.

B R E T H R E N!

**B**EING honour'd with a Trust of such high Importance, as that of being appointed to preside over the Transaction of this Day; I think myself in some measure bound, before I close the Business of it, to enlarge upon the most material Principles of our *Fraternity*,—as it may appear to me consistent with the nature of my Office, and the solemn Cause of our Meeting.

Being persuaded I am speaking to Men already acquainted with the *Origin, Nature, and End* of our Institution, as well as the excellent Rules handed down to us, by those Ornaments of the *Craft*, Who in all ages of the World have distinguish'd themselves by their Zeal for the *Royal Art*;—Rules, which preserve an universal Knowledge of, and Regard for, the *faithful Brother*,  
of



of what Nation or Language he may be, or what Mode of Religion he may profess; provided he constantly maintains that true Catholic Doctrine, of *doing Justice, loving Mercy, and walking humbly with his God*:---Rules, which regulate our Conduct by such principles, as render *F R E E - M A S O N R Y* Honourable, and ourselves useful Members of Society;—and without the Observance of some such like Ordinances as these, no Man can discharge the Duty he owes to God, his Neighbour, and himself; for in these Rules consist the material Points of the *Moral Law*.---Being persuaded (I say) that you are in some Measure acquainted with these Things,—it wou'd be Presumption in me to go about to inform you; —I wou'd only remind you of what relates more particularly to the Business before us: And in doing this, I presume it will be no way disagreeable if I touch, briefly on the several Heads before mentioned. And

I. *First*, of the *Origin* of the Institution of *F R E E - M A S O N R Y*.

And herein, both History and Tradition have fix'd many Periods of Time, as well as many Causes of it's Institution.

Some will have Masonry to subsist from *Adam* and his Sons.—That *Seth* was an Architect appears from the Pillars of Brick and Stone he erected, whereon to carve his *Astronomical* Observations; whereby Times and Seasons, by the Revolutions of the Heavenly Bodies, might be accounted for.



for. And these built he of Force more than equal to the impending Storm, which he, doubtless foresaw wou'd soon lay waste the World, for the Sins of them that dwelt therein.

Much is said of *Tubal-Cain*, the first Artificer in Brass and Iron: But on him we cannot found the Origin of the Craft with more Propriety than it is fix'd on many others of equal Fame for their peculiar Inventions.

On *Noah*, and the great Fabric of the *Ark*, built by God's appointment, to preserve the few faithful of all the *Antediluvians*, is by many rested the Rise of the *Fraternity*.---Others, with more Propriety, begin where the stupendous Work of *Babel* was terminated by a *Confusion of Tongues*; which render'd Signs absolutely necessary to supply the Place of Words, when no Man cou'd understand the Language of his former Friend.---Some particular Signs, amongst the many then in Use, might be, and undoubtedly were, establish'd; whereby they might be known to each other, shou'd they meet again, in any Part of the World, who had before been in *Shinar*.---These being handed down to their Children,—the most wise and prudent of them wou'd, of Course, take Care to preserve them; well knowing the universal Advantages which wou'd necessarily accrue from a League of *Amity, Benevolence, and Brotherly Love*.

And to confirm this Opinion, we need only remark how the Babylonish Empire (founded in the  
Plains

Plains of *Shinar*, where *Babel* stood, by *Nimrod* the Grandson of *Noah*) flourish'd for many Ages; and how the Monarchs of the *Medes* and *Persians* gave the World Laws: In fine, how all the Eastern Emperors arriv'd to, and supported their extensive Power over the many Kingdoms and Provinces in their respective Dominions,—were it not by a Cement far more binding than the modern Treaties of European Princes;—a *Cement* it must be, which, like the fundamental Laws of our *Fraternity*, must remove that aspiring, ambitious Pride and Envy, which divides Empires and Kingdoms, as well as Families and Friends.

But in all ages of the World, we find a Record of unruly Members in every State; grasping at Power to which their Virtues or Abilities were by no means equal, and which too often overthrew the Constitution they attempted to defend. Their own Weakness became the more expos'd, in proportion as their Station in Life render'd them more conspicuous; and their Power usually terminated in Ignominy and Disgrace.

This Observation affords a moral Lesson to Members of private Societies, as well as Kingdoms and States; and is particularly applicable to the Business of this Day; For as much as *You*, who are but now forming yourselves into a Body, shou'd each of you cultivate an humble Diffidence of his own Abilities in his own Breast:—It will render you happy as private Members of *this*, or any other Society; And shou'd the favourable Opinion of your Brethren raise you above your Fellows in Office.

Office, this will cause you to discharge it with a Modesty and Affability becoming every Man in Power.

But to return from this Digression.—It is now universally agreed amongst *Masons*, that at whatever Period of Time this Society was first instituted,—the Means of distinguishing each other, and the peculiar Laws and Ordinances of the *Craft* now in Being, were established at the Building of that inspired Work, the *TEMPLE* of our Grand Master *Solomon*.—

The *Craft* was carried thence into *Tyre* and *Egypt* by those *Tyrian* Workmen, whom *Hiram* their King had sent to assist the Son of *David*, in raising that stupendous Pile:—Whence it was transplanted into *Europe* by that great Mason and Philosopher *Pythagoras*; and after having been honour'd with the Patronage of the greatest in Power, and the most celebrated in Literature, in almost all Nations in the World, for many Ages, —we are happy, this day, in professing ourselves Members of it, in such a respectable Figure as it so deservedly makes in *England*.

To preserve its Dignity is the Business of all its Members;—and to do this, it shou'd be our Study to act consistent with the *Nature* and *End* of it;—which is the next Thing I wou'd consider.

*Free Masonry*, with Respect to Religion, is founded on those Principles as from indubitable Authority we find subsisted before the Ignorance



or Artifice of Men introduc'd Doctrines into the World, repugnant to the revealed Laws of God, and their own unprejudiced Reason.—For a *Mason* is oblig'd by the *fundamental Principles* of his *Profession* firmly to believe in One Eternal and Adorable God, the Maker of all Things, and Judge of all Men;—and to *Square* his Conduct by those sacred Precepts deliver'd to us, by his servants the *Prophets* and *Fathers*, for our Instruction and Comfort.—And so faithfully is he bound, by his *Tenure*, to observe this *Rule* of Conduct, that a good *Craftsman* cannot tread in the Paths of *Libertinism* or *Atheism*, nor be stain'd with the gross Bigotism of blind *Superstition*: But may embrace what particular Mode of Worship he shall in his own Conscience most approve, provided it be no way repugnant to that reverential and spiritual Service his Creator requires.—In Honour and Honesty he is to deal by the World,—ever observing that golden Rule of *doing to all as he wou'd they shou'd do unto him*.

And instead of ent'ring into idle and unnecessary Disputes, concerning the different Opinions and Persuasions of Men, the Members of our *Fraternity* have ever agreed in all Ages thereof,—That good and worthy Men, of every Persuasion, might be admitted into our *Mystery*.—This has been a Means to reconcile Differences amongst Persons, who, without this Assistance, might have spent their whole Lives in a State of Variance.

Nor is this Association in the least dangerous to our particular Constitution.—In the *Lodge* no  
Prophaness

Prophaness is admitted,—no Blasphemy, Lewdness or Swearing heard,—no evil Plotting entertain'd,—no Controversy about Religion or Politics suffer'd.—And tho' *some are of Paul, and others of Apollo's*; yet, in these Principles of our Profession, we all agree, that every Man shou'd labour justly; nor eat any Man's Bread for nought; but, to the utmost of our Capacity, to love and serve each other, as *Brethren* of the same *Household*, and *Fellow-heirs* of the same *Hope*;—wisely reflecting that it wou'd be as absurd to quarrel with another because he will not *believe* as *he* does, as it wou'd be in him to be angry with another because he is not of the same Complexion and Stature.—

Hence it is, that, setting aside every Prejudice of Opinions,—we are taught,—nay constrain'd to Succour the Unfortunate in their Distress;—to divide our Bread with the industrious Poor,—and to put the misguided Traveller into his Way:—In short, to discharge all the relative and social Duties, as Qualifications inseparable from a *good Mason*, and suitable to the *Nature* and *End* of the Institution, which every faithful Craftsman will not fail to support.

The *Masons* have ever made *Faith to the Government*, under which they liv'd, a ruling Principle; and on all Occasions have behav'd with a Loyalty which has procur'd them Protection.—And tho' its first Institution was (undoubtedly) confin'd to *Operative Masons*, or Masters of Work;—yet, its Advantages being soon found, was propagated amongst all Professions and Estates of Men, even

in its early Days: And no greater Proof of its Utility and Excellency can be propos'd, than its Extensiveness, both with respect to the Time of its having subsisted, and the number of its Members of all Nations and Languages; and those the most eminent for their Virtue and Learning, respecting the Times in which they liv'd.——

Had it not been an excellent Institution indeed, it must have been long since abolish'd, thro' the Revolutions of States, or the Caprice of Mankind, —who are too fond of Novelty to adhere long, even to the *best* Measures, thro' a vain Opinion of their own Sufficiency.

When one Man advances a new Scheme, a Fondness for Variety soon engages many Profelytes, however absurd in itself the Doctrine may be.——*Seneca* justly observes, that it fares with us in human Life, as with a routed Army:—One stumbles first, and others fall upon him, 'till the whole Field becomes one Heap of Confusion.

But this *Fraternity*, blessed be God! affords an Exception: For after *having subsisted from Time Immemorial*, and stood the bitterest Shocks it cou'd sustain from undeserved Foes,—it is still preserv'd the same nursery of moral and soeial Virtues; and from whence arise BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF, and FIDELITY unfeigned.

To preserve its Dignity,—and to cement *Harmony*



*morty* on its proper Basis *Love* and *Charity*;—It shall be my next Business to remind you of the most material Rules laid down for our Conduct, both within and out of the *Lodge*: And this in a more particular manner I wou'd direct to *You*, whom we are met this Day to constitute into a Body.

The Word *Lodge* comprehends the whole organiz'd Body of *Free-Masons*, in like Manner as the Word *Church* is expressive of all *Members* thereof, as well as the *Place of Worship*.—But here I wou'd confine the Sense of the Word to the particular Places constituted for our assembling together, after the manner of the *Craft* in all Ages:—To preserve *Order* and *Harmony* herein and to instruct the Members in the Mysteries of the Art, is the Business of the *Master* and presiding *Officers*.—On *your* Conduct chiefly depends the welfare of the *Lodge*.—And as your Body is now in its *Infancy*, it requires the greater Care to establish its Reputation in the Place where 'tis constituted.

A diligent attendance on the Business of the Fraternity will be highly conducive to its Prosperity;—as, on the contrary, an Absence in the Officers of the *Lodge* will naturally beget a like Neglect in the Members.

A particular Regard must be paid to the establish'd Regulations publish'd by Authority, until you can adapt private Laws that may be suitable to the particular Circumstances of your *Lodge*,—  
always

always preserving, with *Care*, the ANCIENT LANDMARKS.

To the *Grand Lodge* be careful to pay the accustomed Acknowledgments;—and recount your most material Transactions as often as Occasion and Opportunity offers.

Exercise the Power wherewith you are now invested, at all Times, with Gentleness; and reprove a Transgressor with *brotherly kindness*, and in *Love*: This will give your Admonition its due Force, and make you respected even by those you chastise.

Let every private Member pay a due Respect to the Master and Officers; and shou'd any Inadvertency appear in *them*, let it be construed with Brotherly Candour; always remembering that *You* yourselves are frail. Such favourable Allowances will cement your Society beyond the Power of Ill-nature to destroy.

Your Conduct out of the Lodge shou'd be regulated by the *Square* with all Men;—keeping yourselves (if possible) upon a *Level* with the Good and Virtuous;—and whilst you walk uprightly, by the *Plumb*, with every Person,—you will be inevitably respected by even the Enemies of our *Craft*, and remove the Prejudices and false Conceptions of unthinking Men.

Having thus reminded you of the Duty of Officers, it remains that I shou'd urge your Care in the Choice of them;—this being of such importance

importance to the Prosperity of your *Lodge*, that you cannot be too cautious herein.—The Charge of each particular Office you have already heard from the respective Grand officers, whose Assistance I am honour'd with in this Solemnity; which leaves it only for me to observe,—that no Man ought to be put in Nomination, but such as, by his known *Ability* and *Merit*, is deem'd capable of discharging well his important Trust.—He shou'd have long Experience and Knowledge in the Mysteries of the *Craft*,—and be well skill'd in the public and private *Rules* and *Orders* of it.—His Morality and Honesty shou'd be unquestionable:—In his Nature, humane,—in his Conversation modest;—of sound Judgment, unbiass'd by Passion or Interest;—in *Friendship*, *sincere*, and in *Secrecy*, *faithful*.—Such a One will do Honour to the *Lodge*;—and to such shou'd the Members be obedient in their demeanor, and Support in the due Discharge of his Office;—and on the other hand, ever reject the *Over-bearing*, *Contentious*, *Impatient*, *Presumptuous* and *Conceited Prattlers*, the Bane of all civil Society.

And here let me recommend to your Regard a Caution of material Import and which has ever been too little attended to, until fatal Experience has render'd the Error known.—The Circumstance I am speaking of is the advancing Men into Office whose slender Knowledge in *Masonry* renders them unable to discharge their Trust, with Credit to themselves or their Lodge, notwithstanding their Intentions may have been very good, and their Character in Life worthy the Dignity of their



their Office:—Many good Lodges have suffer'd by such a Choice, and which, I trust, from this Caution, you'll be careful to avoid.

To what I have already advanc'd as essential to your Prosperity,—there remains another important Caution, and to which you must constantly attend with the utmost Care; for in this, not only the Happiness and Reputation of your Lodge, but the Credit of the whole Fraternity is concern'd; and that is, *The Institution of Members*.

Regard the Morals of the Candidate more than his Fortune; tho' the latter shou'd be such as wou'd not disgrace you to associate with:—But the former shou'd be unexceptionable; and the Countenance of such a Man wou'd be a Credit to the Fraternity.

'Tis needless to enforce this, by observing how many have been initiated into our Mystery, who had not Capacities to comprehend them.

Others, by falling into Scenes of Drunkenness and Debauchery, have neglected their Occupations, and injur'd, if not ruin'd their Families. This reflects an Odium and Disgrace upon the whole Body of *Free-Masons*, amongst those who neither know nor consider, that our Constitutions and Principles are diametrically opposite to such profligate Proceedings.

In the last Place, be careful that no *Pretenders* to the Craft (shou'd any such attempt it) ever gain Admission

Admission into your *Lodge*; and be cautious of the least Word, which may concern the Mystery, before Strangers.—Enter not into Quarrels and Disputes with those, who thro' Ignorance or Prejudice may speak evil of, or ridicule it.—Be always benevolent according to your Ability: When a worthy Brother is oppress'd with Sickness or Poverty, listen with attention to his Affliction, let Pity flow from your Breast, and relieve, without Prejudice, as you find you have Power.

In a Word, Cultivate that *Love* and *Union* amongst yourselves, which will break forth and shine in all the social Offices of true *Friendship* and *Brotherly kindness*; for “*Love is the fulfilling of the Law.*”——And may the *God of Love and Truth* enlighten you in the true Knowledge of the sacred Mysteries, and guide you continually in the due Observance of his most holy Laws;---that thro' his Grace ye may obtain an Eternal Residence in the *LODGE* above, and glorify the Great *I A M*, in the Perfection of Holiness.

*F I N I S.*